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Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

April 29, 2002

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DNF SAFETY BOARD

The Honorable John T. Conway
Chairman
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004-2901

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter is in response to your letter dated March 4, 2002, concerning the Department of Energy's (DOE) efforts to implement a high level waste (HLW) salt processing capability at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

As requested, your concerns have been incorporated, to the extent possible, into the DOE revised Implementation Plan for Recommendation 2001-1 which provides commitments related to implementation of the revised salt processing program. The discussion and commitments in the revised Implementation Plan address your concerns related to acceleration of the caustic side solvent extraction (CSSX) technology through the salt waste processing facility, pursuit of low activity salt disposal, and allows for evaluating alternative salt processing technologies. The revised Implementation Plan is being provided to you under separate cover from the Secretary.

In regards to your concern on the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) recycle water, initiatives to reduce and eliminate the DWPF recycle water, along with other influents, to the HLW tank farms are aggressively being pursued. Initiatives include utilization and disposition of the DWPF recycle water during salt disposition, disposal of recycle directly into grout, and recycle reduction techniques at DWPF (i.e. additional acid evaporator and filtration).

DOE will continue to work closely with you and your staff to communicate our approach and progress on accelerating the HLW processing program at SRS. If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Paul Golan of my staff.

Sincerely,

Jessie H. Roberson
Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

cc:
M. Whitaker, S-3.1
G. Rudy, SRS

